



General Assembly

Substitute Bill No. 5871

February Session, 2008

* _____HB05871ED_____031908_____*

AN ACT CONCERNING THE BEST PROGRAM.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Subsection (d) of section 10-220a of the general statutes is
2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*
3 *1, 2009*):

4 (d) The Department of Education may fund, within available
5 appropriations, in cooperation with one or more regional educational
6 service centers: (1) A cooperating teacher program to train Connecticut
7 public school teachers and certified teachers at private special
8 education facilities approved by the Commissioner of Education and at
9 other facilities designated by the commissioner, who participate in the
10 supervision, training and evaluation of student teachers; and (2)
11 institutes to provide continuing education for Connecticut public
12 school educators [, assessors] and cooperating teachers, [and teacher
13 mentors,] including institutes to provide continuing education for
14 Connecticut public school educators offered in cooperation with the
15 Connecticut Humanities Council. [; and (3) a beginning teacher
16 support and assessment program to train Connecticut public school
17 teachers and other qualified persons approved by the Commissioner of
18 Education and certified teachers at such private special education and
19 other designated facilities who serve as mentors or assessors for

20 beginning teachers and who supervise, train and assist or assess
21 beginning teachers in their initial years in teaching and to pay stipends
22 to assessors.] Funds available under this subsection shall be paid
23 directly to school districts for the provision of substitute teachers when
24 cooperating teachers [, teacher mentors, beginning teachers and
25 assessors] are released from regular classroom responsibilities and for
26 the provision of professional development activities for cooperating
27 and student teachers. [, teacher mentors, assessors and beginning
28 teachers.] The cooperating teacher [and beginning teacher support and
29 assessment programs] program shall operate in accordance with
30 regulations adopted by the State Board of Education in accordance
31 with chapter 54, except in cases of placement in other countries
32 pursuant to written cooperative agreements between Connecticut
33 institutions of higher education and institutions of higher education in
34 other countries. A Connecticut institution may enter such an
35 agreement only if the State Board of Education and Board of
36 Governors for Higher Education have jointly approved the institution's
37 teacher preparation program to enter into such agreements. Student
38 teachers shall be placed with trained cooperating teachers. [Beginning
39 teachers shall participate in a beginning teacher support and
40 assessment program as made available by the board. School districts
41 shall be responsible for providing support to beginning teachers which
42 shall include, but not be limited to, the placement of beginning
43 teachers with trained teacher mentors who may be full or part-time
44 teachers in the same or a different building than the beginning teacher
45 and provision of trained assessors to conduct assessments of beginning
46 teachers. Cooperating teachers, teacher mentors and assessors may
47 serve concurrently in more than one capacity and may be assigned
48 more than one student teacher or beginning teacher in each such
49 capacity. The assessment of each beginning teacher shall be based
50 upon, but not limited to, data obtained from observations conducted
51 by assessors using an assessment instrument. A beginning teacher
52 shall be assessed by educators with teaching experience in the same
53 general subject area as such beginning teacher.] Cooperating teachers
54 [and teacher mentors] who are Connecticut public school teachers [and

55 assessors who are employed by school districts] shall be selected by
56 local and regional boards of education. Cooperating teachers [and
57 teacher mentors and assessors] at such private special education and
58 other designated facilities shall be selected by the authority responsible
59 for the operation of such facilities. If a board of education is unable to
60 identify a sufficient number of individuals to serve in such positions,
61 the commissioner may select qualified persons who are not employed
62 by the board of education to serve in such positions. Such regulations
63 shall require primary consideration of teachers' classroom experience
64 and recognized success as educators. The provisions of sections 10-
65 153a to 10-153n, inclusive, shall not be applicable to the selection,
66 placement and compensation of persons participating in the
67 cooperating teacher [and beginning teacher support and assessment
68 programs] program pursuant to the provisions of this section and to
69 the hours and duties of such persons. The State Board of Education
70 shall protect and save harmless, in accordance with the provisions of
71 section 10-235, any cooperating teacher [, teacher mentor or assessor]
72 while serving in such capacity.

73 Sec. 2. (*Effective July 1, 2008*) Notwithstanding the provisions of
74 section 10-220a of the general statutes, as amended by this act, or any
75 regulation adopted by the State Board of Education pursuant to said
76 section, for the 2008-2009 school year, the Department of Education
77 shall not require any beginning teacher being assessed as part of the
78 beginning teacher support and assessment program to complete a
79 video component as part of such assessment program.

80 Sec. 3. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a task force to
81 develop a plan to replace the beginning educator support and training
82 program with a mentor assistance program starting with the 2009-2010
83 school year. The plan shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
84 (1) Requirements for an initial educator's successful completion of the
85 mentor assistance program, (2) sequence support modules based on
86 state standards as set forth in the Common Core of Teaching, as
87 developed by the Department of Education, (3) requirements
88 concerning (A) mentor eligibility and assignments and training of

89 mentors, and (B) the frequency with which mentor teachers should
90 meet with beginning teachers, (4) methods to encourage collaboration
91 from the Department of Education, Regional Educational Service
92 Centers and local and regional school districts to identify, recruit and
93 retain mentors, and (5) recommendations concerning the development
94 of a data collection and evaluation system for monitoring the mentor
95 assistance program on local and state-wide levels. The task force
96 should consider whether legislative changes should be made,
97 including, but not limited to, amending section 10-220a of the general
98 statutes to (i) require a reduced classroom teaching work load for
99 mentors, as determined by the school district, (ii) expand the categories
100 of persons who can become mentors, (iii) require that beginning
101 teachers receive and complete the mentor assistance program during
102 their first two years of certification, and (iv) require that school
103 districts receive full funding to implement the mentor assistance
104 program.

105 (b) The task force shall consist of the following members:

106 (1) The chairpersons and ranking members of the joint standing
107 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
108 relating to education, or their designees;

109 (2) The chairpersons and ranking members of the Legislative
110 Program Review and Investigations Committee, or their designees;

111 (3) Four appointed by the House of Representatives chairperson of
112 the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having
113 cognizance of matters relating to education, one of whom shall be a
114 member of the Connecticut Education Association, one of whom shall
115 be a member of the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education,
116 one of whom shall be a member of the Connecticut Association of
117 Schools and one of whom shall be a member of the Connecticut
118 Federation of School Administrators;

119 (4) Four appointed by the Senate chairperson of the joint standing
120 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters

121 relating to education, one of whom shall be a member of the
 122 Connecticut chapter of the American Federation of Teachers, one of
 123 whom shall be a member of Connecticut Association of Public School
 124 Superintendents, one of whom shall be a member of the Connecticut
 125 Parent Teacher Association and one of whom shall be a teacher at a
 126 regional vocational-technical school; and

127 (5) The Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee.

128 (c) All appointments to the task force shall be made no later than
 129 thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall be
 130 filled by the appointing authority.

131 (d) The chairperson of the task force shall be the Commissioner of
 132 Education, or the commissioner's designee. The chairperson shall
 133 schedule the first meeting of the task force, which shall be held no later
 134 than sixty days after the effective date of this section.

135 (e) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the
 136 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education
 137 shall serve as administrative staff of the task force.

138 (f) Not later than January 1, 2009, the task force shall report, in
 139 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes,
 140 its findings and recommendations to the joint standing committee of
 141 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to
 142 education and to the Legislative Program Review and Investigations
 143 Committee. The task force shall terminate on the date that it submits
 144 such report or January 1, 2009, whichever is earlier.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2009</i>	10-220a(d)
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2008</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>from passage</i>	New section

ED *Joint Favorable Subst.*